

and women had given up on them. They deserve, at the least, the most we can give—the Medal of Honor.

I would like now to ask the military aides to read the citations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:45 p.m. in a pavilion on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. David H. Hicks, chaplain, USA, who gave the invocation; Secretary Cohen's wife, Janet Langhart Cohen; and Secretary West's wife, Gail.

Videotape Remarks to Participants of the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee

June 21, 2000

I'm glad to have this opportunity to welcome all of you to Washington and to the 73d annual National Spelling Bee.

In 1961, when I was about your age, President Kennedy said we should think of education as a private hope and dream, which fulfilled can benefit everyone and strengthen our Nation. That's even more true today. Your long list of accomplishments, uncommon dedication, and commitment to learning will serve as a lifelong asset to you and to your communities.

Regardless of who wins today, you should all be proud of your achievements. You've come a long way. So I join your parents and your teachers in congratulating you. Your commitment to excellence spells success in the years ahead, not just for you but for all America.

Thank you, and good luck today.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 5:30 p.m. on May 11 in the Map Room for later broadcast. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Report

June 21, 2000

Today's report by the Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) demonstrates that our administration is tough on gun traffickers who peddle guns to criminals and young people.

Between July 1996 and December 1998, ATF initiated more than 1,500 firearms trafficking investigations, resulting in Federal convictions of 812 criminals to a total of 7,420 years in prison—with an average sentence of 9 years.

Gun trafficking puts thousands of guns onto our Nation's streets and contributes significantly to our Nation's gun violence problem. The investigations documented in today's report involved the diversion of more than 84,000 firearms from the legal to illegal market. The report shows that loopholes in our laws help make gun shows and corrupt gun dealers major channels for gun trafficking. Many of the diverted weapons supplied by traffickers were later used to commit serious crimes, including homicides, robberies, and assaults. Each gun put into the hand of a criminal represents the possibility of one more life lost, one more family destroyed.

Through tough enforcement and smart prevention, we have reduced gun crime by 35 percent and increased Federal gun prosecutions 16 percent since 1992. There is more we can do to keep guns out of the wrong hands. I will continue to press the Congress to fully fund my \$280 million gun enforcement initiative, to add more ATF agents and inspectors to crack down on gun traffickers, corrupt gun dealers, and armed gun criminals, as well as hire more Federal, State, and local gun prosecutors to put more gun criminals behind bars. But Congress must also close the deadly loopholes in our laws that make guns accessible to criminals and children in the first place. Congress should move forward to close the deadly gun show loophole once and for all and pass other stalled commonsense gun measures without further delay.

Remarks at an Irish-American Democrats Dinner Honoring Terence McAuliffe

June 21, 2000

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, let me say, I had to rush over here from another event, and I didn't